

your eyes hold both the sunset and the dawn

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by [dxncingwithwolves](#)

Summary

What should have happened in Shadow and Bone after the winter fete.

Alina, tired of feeling helpless, decides to stay at the Little Palace and fight for what she wants : a place where she can belong.

As she embraces her powers and the darkness within her, she sides with the Darkling to rule over Ravka and destroy her country's enemies.

Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Alina was running, still trying to make sense of the information she had just received from Baghra.

The Darkling was the Black Heretic.

He was responsible for the Fold.

He wanted to use her, tame her, *enslave her* in order to expand that monstrosity. Wanted to use her powers and take over the world.

Her heart ached. Had it all been a lie?

Every stolen glance, every half-smile, every kiss? Just another way for him to toy with her, manipulate her into submissiveness?

Saints, what a fool I've been, she thought to herself.

Clearly, he only saw her as a naïve, innocent girl way in over her head. Someone he could bend to his will and use until there was nothing left for him to take.

Alina's feet were aching, but she didn't care. She had to keep going.

But... going where, exactly? Was she ready to give up, ready to live the rest of her existence in foreign lands?

Her mind wandered back to what Mal had said to her hours ago.

"Just admit it. He owns you".

Even knowing what she did now, her friends' words felt wrong.

Her breathing was ragged, uneven. The blood pounding though her heart like a violent drum made it difficult for her to think clearly. All she could see was Mal, repeating that same sentence over and over again.

"Just admit it. He owns you".

Did he really, though?

And that's when she realised.

Mal was wrong. The Darkling didn't *own* her. He had simply offered her everything she never thought she wanted. Was it so wrong of her to like it?

She remembered the euphoric feeling that took over her during the presentation as she showcased her powers, the Darkling by her side. The admiration that shined in the eyes of every single person present in that room. The awe, the wonder, but also the fear that she could see in their faces as her light played with the Darkling's shadows.

"You and I are going to change the world".

And suddenly, she believed that they could. Suddenly, she realised that she *wanted* to change the world with him, to never come down from the high she had felt during the demonstration.

So what if he was using her all along? Did it even matter, if it made her feel so *alive*? Did it matter, when *she* was using *him* too?

Immediately, Alina stopped, panting heavily.

Her head was clear now.

Alina was tired of running. Tired of fighting her way through life, clinging to childhood memories that weighed her down more than anything else. Tired of proving she belonged somewhere, only for it to be ripped away from her almost instantly.

The Darkling had offered her the world, and Alina was damn sure going to take it.

She rushed back to her rooms, her fatigue forgotten, praying to the Saints that no one had noticed something was off. A guard was posted in front of her door. As he saw her approach, confusion clouded his features. Channelling the confidence she'd felt earlier that evening, she adopted a neutral face and attempted to drown out the slight feeling of panic that was rising in her.

"Your services are no longer required", she announced firmly. "You can leave now".

Her voice seemed cold, unfamiliar. Ruthless. She loved it.

"With all due respect, Miss. Starkov, I was told..."

"These are the Darkling's orders. If you have any complaints, take them up to him directly".

At the sound of his name, the guard froze, paralyzed by terror. And Alina liked that. She liked how the mere mention of the Darkling was enough to make people tremble and shiver, how his title inspired fright and respect. She wanted the same for her.

"No need for that, miss", the guard added promptly. "I'll be on my way".

"Wait! Before you go, did he... has anyone requested to talk to me while I was gone?"

"No miss, I haven't seen anyone all night. Now, if you'll excuse me..."

He nodded respectfully and walked away.

Alina felt relief, but also... disappointment. Maybe the Darkling had abandoned the idea of coming to her tonight.

As she entered her room, she felt the clothes she was wearing weighing heavily on her body. They were covered in dirt and dust, damp with her sweat. She needed to get rid of them, to clean herself up and come up with some sort of plan. Sliding into the bathtub in the adjoining bathroom, Alina let her tense muscles relax under the warm water that was slowly rising around her. She thought of what she would do next. What she would say to *him*, either tonight or... tomorrow, if he didn't show. She tried to ignore how sad it made her that he might not.

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Alina was deep in her thoughts when she heard three sharp knocks resonating from her room. Trying to suppress the adrenaline that was now rushing through her veins, she got out of the tub, tying a blue, short silk robe around her naked body. Even without seeing him, she knew it was the Darkling waiting behind the closed door. She could feel it in the air, which was vibrant with electric energy. And she was right.

She let him in cautiously, not wanting to let him know anything had changed between the two of them.

"I wasn't sure you'd let me in", he said slowly, standing in the middle of the unlit room, his eyes fixed on the girl who had not moved, back pressed to the now closed door.

It took her a while to answer. Her mind was going through different scenarios, weighing in the options that she had before her. She was acutely aware that her next words would seal her fate. She made her choice as she responded, her eyes locked on his.

"I'll always let you in. You should know that by now".

And she meant it.

The Darkling couldn't quite figure out what it was, but *something* was different about Alina. Her shyness and clumsiness seemed forgotten, and the woman in front of him seemed... determined, confident. Ready to take on the world. He also noticed the tiny droplets of water falling from her hair, roaming her skin and disappearing between her breasts, soaking the damn robe that covered them. Noticed how they were caressing her legs as they fell, forming a pool of water shining with moonlight against the white marble floor. Something in him *ached* to lick every single one of those drops, to let his mouth trail her body in the same way they were.

Alina's voice snapped him out of his fantasy.

"However, there are things we need to discuss. I talked to your mother. She told me everything."

She studied his face as she broke the news. As expected, he seemed unphased by what she had said and his expression remained unreadable, stoic like a rock sculpted by the Saints themselves.

She pressed on:

"I know who you are".

Silence seemed to drag on forever.

"And what am I, exactly?" He finally asked, as calm as ever.

In that instant, Alina hated him. Hated how he could remain so indifferent, even when he knew she knew what a terrible person he was. Didn't he care?

"Don't make me say it", Alina hissed.

"I *want* you to say it", he growled in return, getting closer to her. "Tell me Alina, what *am* I? A fool? A monster? a god?"

Before she could react, the Darkling was in front of her, trapping her body against the wooden door.

"The Black Heretic", she answered finally, staring directly into his darkened gaze, refusing to be afraid of him.

"Does that scare you, Alina?", he asked, his breath hot against her skin.

He was towering over her, his face inches away from hers, taking in every detail he could of her delicate features, trying to figure out what the hell it was that she was thinking. Surely, she couldn't hate him for the truth his mother had revealed to her. She'd be halfway across Ravka by now if that were the case.

"At first, I thought it did", she admitted truthfully. "I was very close to running away from here. I was ready to leave Ravka and never see you again".

The Darkling refused to acknowledge the way his heart sank at her words.

The problem with wanting is that it makes us weak.

"Then why are you here?" He murmured in response, voice low and deep.

"Because I decided to fight for what I want", she admitted.

"And what is it that you want, exactly?"

"What you have. What we have together. The power I felt during that demonstration... I've never felt anything like it. I'm not ready to give it up, not to you, not to anyone".

She drew her face closer to his, lifting up her chin to keep the eye-contact.

"But hear me carefully, Darkling. I will *not* be your toy. I will *not* be your slave. If you put that collar around my neck, I will resist it with every fiber of my being. I will pierce through my own heart with a dagger and let the life bleed out of me. And you, you will lose your sun summoner. You will lose any chance you had at ruling this country".

He didn't try to deny the horrid plans he had for her. Didn't try to make up excuses or justifications for his intentions. He clenched his jaw, out of frustration, anger...*lust*. The Alina he had in front of him was fiery, feisty. A woman ready to fight, to kill, to destroy every single thing holding her back. A conqueror, just like him.

"I will kill the stag", she declared. "And when I do, I'll stand by your side as we burn our country's enemies to the ground. I'll sit beside you when you steal the throne from our incompetent king. And I'll kill however tries to stand in our way".

The Darkling's eyes darkened. Here she was, embodying everything he had ever wanted. A kindred soul. An equal. Someone who *understood*.

Like calls to like.

"Very well", he said through gritted teeth. "You will kill the stag. We leave tomorrow."

"Perfect".

"Perfect".

Neither Alina nor the Darkling moved. This seemed like the end of their conversation, and yet... They didn't want it to end. Tension was budling up in the air, buzzing between their two bodies. Alina was painfully aware of how close he was to her, his breath mingling with hers.

It was Alina who broke the silence first.

"Why did you come tonight?" She whispered, trying her best to hide the nervousness and the want that were raging within her.

"You know why, Alina".

Visions of a dark, abandoned room appeared before her. Of hushed moans and wandering hands, angry, passionate kisses and devouring, lingering eyes. The sounds of rustling fabric removed to reveal unexplored skin and igniting desire.

"What are you waiting for, then?" She dared him with a newfound determination.

That was all it took for him to crash his lips into hers, cupping her jaw with one hand and slamming her against the door with the other, his body pressing firmly against her as she rose

onto her toes for better access. The kiss was brutal and savage. Unrestrained. Alina felt power surging from within her, ready to answer the Darkling's touch stroke for stroke. And he could feel it too. He could feel the way Alina's body called to his darkness, seemed to nurture it and amplify it. The both of them, together, were power. Light and dark, night and day, sunset and dawn. Two complete opposites perfect for each other.

The Darkling was merciless with his kisses, biting and gritting at Alina's lower lip, her mind going numb with such sweet pain. A sigh escaped from her mouth as she buried her hands in his dark, silky hair, pulling slightly at the strands and eliciting a deep groan from the man. In response, he secured both of his hands on her hips before dragging them lower, grasping her ass and lifting her up, her legs wrapped around him, the wooden frame of the door hard and rough on her back. The abrupt gesture surprised Alina, who failed at suppressing her moan. It was like music to his ears. He knew, at that very moment, that he'd be willing to steal the stars from the night sky in order to hear that melody again.

His mouth left hers, exploring the warm skin of Alina's neck while pressing himself against her parted thighs. She could feel his hardness against her throbbing core, and she grind against him, desperate for friction, desperate to feel the cock straining his pants against her bare centre, desperate for... more. She had never felt this way before, ignited with power, ignited with *want*.

"Now, now, Alina. Don't be greedy", he murmured, chuckling slowly.

His long fingers trailed from her ass to her stomach, landing on the bow securing her robe, Alina steady against the door and hooked around him. With an unhurried, deliberate gesture, he tugged lightly at the strings, allowing for the blue silk to cascade down her shoulders, revealing her heavy breasts. His gaze was focused, hungry as he took in the sight before him, relishing the way Alina's eyes closed, lips slightly parted, as he took one of them in his hands, squeezing it lightly.

His hand moved up, lingering on her skin as it settled against Alina's throat, choking her gently.

"I want to take my time with you", he announced huskily. "The things I want to do to you Alina... They're infinite".

Alina barely registered that, whilst he was whispering such sweet words in her ear, his other hand had moved up her left thigh, dangerously close to the wetness that was pooling between her folds.

"If you'll allow me, of course", he added swiftly, caressing her skin.

"I... I..." She moaned loudly, unable to formulate a coherent sentence. His fingers had moved up, touching her *right there*, grazing her clit with torturous delicateness.

"What was that? I'm not sure I understood what you said", he said teasingly, circling her clit with deliberate movements.

"Everything", she finally said, gasping for air. "I want everything you have to offer".

He smiled, pushing two of his ringed fingers inside of her, pumping her slowly.

"My dear Alina.... You have no idea what those words mean to me".

All she could do in response was whimper under his delicious touch. But she needed more. She needed it harder, needed him unbridled and unrestrained. She wanted to see fucking stars, to unravel completely before him, *by* him. And she knew he wanted it too. She was painfully aware of how his clothed dick was hard against his stomach, ready to take her, ready to fill her up completely.

"I... want more", whispered Alina, meeting his eyes with his fingers still inside of her. "Please".

His cock twitched at her words. The way she was looking at him... He wasn't sure if he deserved it, but he sure as hell didn't care. With or without the collar, Alina would be *his*. He wanted nothing more than to claim her for himself, to watch as he spilled inside her and his cum oozed out of her. That image only excited him more, if that was even possible, and the Darkling was ready to lay her down on her bed and take her in the most debauched ways.

He removed his fingers slowly, admired how they gleamed with her wetness. Without breaking eye-contact, he took them to his mouth, licking them slowly. The obscene sight made Alina gasp, her pussy clamping around nothingness. Carefully, the Darkling put Alina down, allowing for the fabric gathered around her waist to slide down her trembling legs. Here she was, bare before him, the window across the room bathing her in silver moonlight. She looked like a fucking goddess.

Alina didn't shy away from his intense gaze. On the contrary, she loved the way he seemed to admire her, as if she was the fucking sun itself, as if she was the most beautiful being to ever walk this goddamn planet. As if he would do anything for her. It was something that she had wanted all her life, but from the wrong person. How foolish had she been, pining after Mal when the Darkling was right there? He was not some boy, weak and immature, but a man who would soon be king. A man who saw her and unleashed her potential, her light, her power. Even better, a man who *loved* her for it instead of cowering before it. A man who completed her.

"Before we go any further, though..."

Alina dragged her hands along his black kefta. He drew in a breath as she started unbuttoning it before removing it entirely, the garment dropping on the floor, joining her robe. His undershirt followed, and soon her hands were at the hoop of his belt, applying the most mind-numbing pleasure on his hardness.

The belt fell with a clang.

Unable to resist her pull any longer, the Darkling kissed Alina, need obscuring his thoughts as his tongue pushed into her mouth. Her hands worked swiftly on the button of his pants all whilst giving in to him, and soon enough, he was naked before her, his hard, thick cock resting proudly against his stomach. It was big, but that didn't frighten her. If anything, she wanted him to fill her with every single inch of his dick, stretching her apart with glorious

pain, and pound into her so hard it hurt, so hard it'd make her scream and curse. She took him in his hands, stroking up and down his long shaft, her thumb toying with the tip that was already slick with pre-cum. He shuddered, teeth sinking into her neck and biting onto her skin.

Her touch would be his undoing.

"Oh, Alina... The things you do to me".

His hand shot abruptly to her wrist, stopping her in her movement.

"But tonight, I want to do things to do", he murmured in her ear. "I'll try my best to be... gentle. But I do not guarantee anything".

Leaning into him, Alina drew her mouth to his ear, giving him a taste of his own medicine.

"I don't want you to be gentle", Alina replied. "I want you to fucking tear me apart", she whispered back.

The Darkling smiled. She was fucking perfect.

Without wasting any more time, he guided her to the bed, letting her back fall into the mattress. The Darkling moved on top of her, lowering himself between her parted thighs. Soon, the tip of his cock was teasing her entrance before slipping inside of her completely. His mind went blank. There was only pleasure as Alina squeezed around him, keeping him in, pushing him in closer with her legs wrapped around him.

He kissed her savagely, drinking from her lips as if they were the sweetest nectar he had ever tasted, and before he knew it his hips were thrusting violently into her, making her moan with each one of his movements. Light emanated from her as shadows fell upon their intertwined bodies.

"I... Oh", whimpered Alina, who was now scratching his back with her hands, leaving faint red trails along his skin.

The pain fuelled the Darkling in his movements, and soon Alina was biting his shoulder, the pleasure he was giving her almost too unbearable. She was totally and utterly at the mercy of the rhythm of his rolling hips. Release was already building inside of her, but she wasn't ready to let go just yet.

Her voice was hoarse as she muttered the words that would unleash him entirely :

"Harder... please".

A wicked smile illuminated his features.

"I thought you'd never ask".

He kissed her again, his left hand squeezing her breast in a way that made her eyes roll.

His lips trailed to her jaw.

"Turn... "

He was devouring her neck now, his dick still deep inside of her.

"... Around", he added finally.

Alina did as he asked, sliding out of him for just a brief moment, and he loved to see her like that. Obedient. Pleading. *His*.

He secured his hands on her hips, forcibly lifting her backside and exposing her wet, gleaming pussy before him. Before she knew it, he was inside of her again, pounding into her without any semblance of restraint, his fingers tangling into her hair, tugging at it, pulling her head closer so that he could devour her neck. Suck at it. Claim. Everyone would see the marks she would bear tomorrow. Everyone would know who had fucked her so thoroughly, who had made her scream into the night. His other hand slid between her legs, touching that oh so sensitive spot that had her cursing within seconds.

Alina's climax hit her like a tidal wave, her body unravelling under the Darkling's touch as he rode her orgasm thoroughly, chasing his own release as she came down of her own and, finally, groaning loudly whilst spilling hot spurts of liquid into her.

His body fell on top of hers, and they stayed there for a moment, breathing heavily, before he removed himself from her, a rush of cum following his movement, running down her legs, soaking the mattress.

Alina turned around to face him, cupping her face with her hand. She kissed him again, this time slowly, passionately, and something inside him *broke*. He would never, ever, be tired of this.

They spent the night tangled in her bedsheets, their bodies pressed together as they slept, illuminated by the soft glow of the moon.

Tomorrow, their hunt for Morozova's herd would begin.

Chapter End Notes

This is my first work here. I'm my own beta, so if you see any mistakes, please let me know in the comments. Hope you enjoyed xx

Follow me on twitter [@starless_saints](#) if you want to simp over the Darkling with me :-)

Listen to the [darkling playlist](#) I use while writing :-)

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

I had to write this because Alina picking a blue kefta instead of a black one in S&B is my villain origin story.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The Darkling woke up first. As the rising sun flooded Alina's room with warm rays of sunshine, all he could do was admire the way the light played on the reflections of her dark brown hair, embedding little specks of gold here and there. His gaze drifted to her neck, covered with purple bruises, adorning her skin like an unusual constellation. Flashes of last night materialized before his eyes, visions of bare skin and white teeth, of arching backs and sharp nails digging into his flesh combined with the sounds of barely contained moans and whimpers, of midnight promises and expectations.

He ran a finger through his messy black hair. He was in such deep trouble.

He had a carefully laid out plan, one he'd worked on for centuries, perfecting it, honing it, waiting for the right time to act. He was used to lurking in the shadows, thinking his every move like a chess player moving his pieces across a board. And now, in the span of a few months, Alina had waltzed into his life unannounced and turned everything upside down. At first, he thought this wouldn't derail anything. On the contrary, she was his missing chess piece, a tool he could use to finally exploit the Fold in a way that would advantage him. But then... he realised there was something about Alina. Some inexplicable attraction that drew him to her. And last night... It had changed everything. But a part of him still worried. A part of him still wanted to kill Morozova's stag and put the collar around Alina's neck, just in case. Just to be sure she wouldn't betray him. Just to ensure she would never leave him. He had lived such a long, lonely life, comfortable with an existence he didn't share with anybody. He had forgotten what it was like to rely on others, to care for others. To trust, to confide... To *love*.

His worries shattered the minute Alina opened her sleepy eyes, his soul softening at the sight of her body shifting slightly on the bed, gaining consciousness, becoming aware of her surroundings, becoming aware of *him*. Remembering what they had done. She blushed slightly, taking in their nakedness, but did not shy away from it. On the contrary, she rose on the bed, depositing a small, chaste kiss on the Darkling's cheek. Then moving to his jaw. His nose. And finally, his mouth. The Darkling refused to move, worried that any sudden movement from his part would shatter the spell, ruin the magic between them. Would make her realise she had made a mistake. Would make her remember he wasn't a good man. Would make her run again.

But Alina stayed. And somehow, that meant more to him than anything ever had.

"I should go", said the Darkling after a while. "I've got to get back to my rooms, prepare our trip up north".

He rose from the bed, gathering the discarded garments laying all over the bedroom floor. He was fully clothed when he approached her again, planting a small kiss at the corner of her mouth, his stubble grazing her jaw.

"I'll see you soon, Alina".

And there he went, leaving her alone. Already, the room seemed duller, her mind wearier. The affect he had on her... She couldn't put it into words. On top of that, Alina wondered just how much last night had changed her standing with the Darkling. What it had meant to him. Where they even... together, now? She felt childish, thinking about it like that, like she was some love-sick, enamoured teenager. She was the Sun Summoner, for fuck's sake. And yet, she couldn't help it. She knew the kind of pull he had on people. Surely, he must've had a plethora of women —and maybe even men— warming his bed through the course of his existence.

It was Genya who pulled her out of her grim thoughts, carrying in her hands a folded blue kefta lined with fur in prevision of their expedition. She said nothing as she came into the room, registering Alina's dishevelled hair, the ruffled bed sheets, the imprint of another body left on the empty side of the mattress. But her small, all-knowing smile was clear enough for Alina.

"Oh, stop it!" She said, throwing a pillow in direction of her friend.

"Stop what?" replied Genya, a hint of humour in her voice.

"Stop looking me like that!"

Genya's delicate laughter filled the room.

"I'm just happy for you. Looks like you had a lot of fun last night", she declared.

She paused, sitting on the corner of her bed, her face a bit more serious this time:

"Just... be careful, okay? He's a powerful man, and I'd hate for you to get hurt".

It was Alina's turn to smile.

"I'm a powerful woman. If anything, it's him who should be afraid of me".

And as she said those words, even though she meant them as a joke, she realised just how true they rang.

"That, you are", said Genya. "I trust you're taking your... precautions, yes? Or do you need me to get you anything?"

Alina blushed slightly, unaccustomed to having such talks with... anyone, really.

"I'm all set, thanks".

"Perfect, then! I'll go fetch us breakfast while you get dressed. You'll be leaving soon".

Alina's heart filled with warmth. It felt nice, having a friend like Genya. Someone who cared for her. Someone she could rely on and talk to about these things. Someone with whom it was... easy. It hadn't been easy with Mal for a while, and she had forgotten that friendship wasn't something that needed to be forced the way she did with him. Because even though she tried and tried, desperate to keep her childhood friend, he never reciprocated such attentions. Never seemed to care. He was too busy fooling around with different women, too busy with his military friends to pay attention to her. And she was done trying to keep him from slipping through her fingers, done being satisfied with the little crumbs of attention he'd give her every once in a while, just enough to keep her hooked, but never enough to actually make her happy. She deserved better, and the time spent at the Little Palace had shown her that.

As she got out of bed, her fingers trailed along the blue kefta Genya had left for her. It felt... wrong, somehow. That colour wasn't who she was anymore. When she made the decision to wear the Summoner's blue instead of the Darkling's black, she was still afraid of her own powers. Afraid to stand out. Afraid to be different. All she wanted was to get rid of her light and become normal again in order to go back to Mal. Everything had changed now. Last night, she had come to terms with who she was becoming, and she'd finally embraced the sun raging inside of her, hungry for more.

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She was in the courtyard of the Little Palace. Dozens of Grisha were preparing individual horses, ready to take on this complicated journey alongside the Darkling and his Oprichniki. She couldn't spot him in the buzzing crowd, but she could feel him, sensing the way her body was pulled towards his.

"I must say..." stated a voice in her ear, surprising Alina from behind. "That I preferred you in black".

Alina turned around, startled. There stood the Darkling in all his stoic glory, his clothing crisp, his jaw sharp, his eyes as unreadable as always. Taking him in, Alina became painfully aware of the soreness between her legs, but also of the way her body seemed to crave him even more with each minute that passed without him by her side.

"So did I", she confessed. "Maybe, when we get back... I'll ask Genya to change it for me. I know she'll be happy about that", she laughed.

All she got in return from the Darkling was a cryptic look. Before she knew it, he had summoned Ivan, muttering some orders that she could not hear. The Heartrender nodded slightly before walking away, leaving the two of them alone again.

"What was that all about?" she asked, amused.

"You'll find out soon enough", replied the man, the hint of a smile illuminating his face.

"I guess I will", replied Alina. "Can you tell me, at least, why there's half of the Second Army here with us? I thought we had to be discreet while traveling".

"We need to get to Tisbeya before we lose Morozova's herd again. Carriages will slow us down, and I can't take any chances when it comes to your safety. They're here for you, Alina. To protect you. You're too precious to lose".

His voice caressed her skin like a feather. He had a way of talking that made Alina's head turn. Every word was slow, deliberately articulated, but at the same time imbued with power and authority.

"Well, that sounds absolutely perfect, but I think you should know that I can't ride a horse to save my life. So, unless you want me tumbling to my death..."

"Oh, I know that. Don't you worry, Alina. Leave it all to me".

Ivan interrupted them before she could add anything else, leaving her head buzzing with questions. What exactly had he planned for her?

Alina noticed the Heartrender had a black winter kefta in hand. Her heart skipped a beat at the sight of it, before noticing it seemed too big and loose to fit on her small body. That meant it had to be one of the Darkling's. She looked at him with questioning eyes, his gaze meeting hers for a second. Without saying a word to her, the Darkling called for David. The Materialki took one look at the coat before taking it in his hands, the soft glow of his powers working on the fabric.

"It's done", he announced soberly. "It won't be perfect, but it'll fit".

He handed the garment back to the Darkling and Alina could see that the kefta had changed under the Fabrikator's touch. It was smaller and cinched at the waist now. Perfect for her to wear. Alina's breath caught in her throat as the Darkling drew closer to her, the kefta folded over one of his arms.

"Allow me" he stated sultrily.

Before she could register what was happening, the Darkling's fingers were on the buttons of her blue kefta, undoing them one by one, starting with the ones that she had clasped at her neck to hide the marks he had left on her. Wetness pooled between her legs as the Darkling worked on them, the phantom of his touch applying the tiniest bits of pressure on her body, driving it crazy with want. After what seemed like an excruciating eternity, he slid the coat off from her shoulders, tossing it towards Ivan, leaving her in a blouse and trousers. Exposing

her bruised skin for everyone to see. She locked her eyes on his, seeing a flash of triumph intertwined with desire animating his dark stare.

The Grisha around them had gone still, quiet as they watched the Darkling wrapping the black kefta that had once been his around Alina's body and buttoning it up all over again. She broke away from the hold his gaze had on her, she surveyed the silent crowd and noticed how, in a sea of blue and red and charcoal, a single man dressed in military brown stood out. Mal. His eyes were throwing daggers at the two of them, the tracker visibly enraged with the way the Darkling's hands moved along Alina's body with such familiarity.

Good, she thought vindictively. *Let him see where I stand.*

The Darkling leaned in with his fingers hovering over the last unfastened button:

"Black really does suit you, Alina", he whispered in her ear. "But I bet you'd look even lovelier with my hands around your neck".

Grinning slightly at the way Alina's face seemed to heat at his words, the man broke away from her, his voice now ringing loud and clear:

"Are we ready to leave?"

Several Grisha nodded in approval.

"Good", he said. "Bring me my horse. She rides with me", he stated, loud enough for everyone to hear.

Alina's heart was beating furiously in her chest, her mind trying to register what had just happened.

The Darkling had claimed her.

Chapter End Notes

This is my first work here. I'm my own beta, so if you see any mistakes, please let me know in the comments. Hope you enjoyed xx

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Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

I apologize in advance for this, I just can't help being a hoe.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Alina wanted to scream.

They had been riding for several hours now, and the tension that coursed through her body was getting unbearable.

The journey had started innocently enough, Alina's back pressed to the Darkling's chest, her frame trapped between his arms as he guided their black stallion. She had tried to ignore their closeness as best as she could, focusing on the changing landscape to avoid thinking about *him*, but there was only so much that battered roads a dense sea of thick trees could do.

First, she grew aware of the Darkling's breath, hot and heavy against her, and the way it caressed her from behind. Then, her senses picked up on his smell, a torturous mix of coffee and caramel entwined with the smoke of his cologne. The scent was emanating from him, but Alina quickly realised it was also impregnated in the fabric of the kefta she wore, the one that had once belonged to him, and it was like having him on her body all over again. Finally, her gaze dropped to the hands that were tightly wrapped around the reins of the horse, the only part of him that she could see. Her mouth watered at the sight of his fingers, some of them adorned with heavy silver rings, as she remembered the way they had pumped into her the night before, the cold metal of the jewellery only adding to her pleasure.

Alina shifted in her saddle, trying to suppress the rush of heat that ran through her body, desperately trying to ignore the wetness pooling between her thighs. Behind her, the Darkling noted what he mistook for discomfort:

"Everything alright?" He asked, leaning into her, his voice deep and hoarse.

His question set Alina's blood on fire. She could remember the way he had spoken to her in that same raspy tone as his hands travelled her skin, the way he'd teased her and commanded her as he made her see stars.

She tried her best to control her words as she replied:

"Yeah, don't worry about it", she stated, feeling a bit breathless.

All she heard in response was a low chuckle.

It wasn't discomfort that bothered his Sun Summoner so much, but something else entirely. Something way more interesting.

Out of the corner of his eye, the Darkling surveyed their surroundings, noticing how every single Grisha and Oprichniki had their eyes focused on the road, all of them on high alert to prevent any sort of danger that might threaten Alina. He smiled a little, delighted with the knowledge that none were paying attention to him.

His right hand let go of the reins, finding its way under Alina's kefta and landing on her upper thigh. He smiled, loving the way Alina's body went rigid against him, almost as if she were trying to refrain herself from doing something reckless. He didn't move his hand at first, letting it rest there, pretending nothing out of the ordinary was going on, driving Alina closer to madness. Her heart was beating furiously in her chest and every nerve on her body seemed to respond to the Darkling's touch burning against the fabric of her pants.

Then, slowly, his hand started moving up and down Alina's thigh, soft caresses that almost made her whimper, her mind going totally blank.

"What... are you doing?" she asked with the small remnants of lucidity she had.

"Whatever do you mean, dear?" he replied in return, adoring the tension growing between them as his hand rode up, up, up Alina's thigh, leaving a trail of fire and embers in its wake.

"You know what I mean", she said through her gritted teeth.

"Well, at the moment, I'm rather busy riding this horse but if you want me to stop it for you, just say so", he declared, the sentence heavy with implication.

She could almost hear his small grin as she sat there, weighing in his proposition.

The old Alina would've asked him to stop, too afraid to succumb to her desires and let herself go, too afraid of the people around them who could catch them in an indecent position. But that Alina was gone, buried six feet under along her insecurities and her fears. The new Alina smiled, caving in and playing along, curious to see where it would all lead.

"I'd rather if you didn't, actually... Time is of the essence after all. We can't afford missing the herd".

"Glad to hear we're on the same page", he declared, surprising Alina by dragging his hand to her hips, pulling her closer to him to have her bottom completely cradled between his thighs. He wanted to make her feel him, all of him. Wanted her to realize what she provoked in him with just the feather of a touch. Wanted her to understand how crazy she drove him.

Alina almost moaned at the contact, noticing the hardness that was now pressing against her ass. She grinded a little over it, trying to get back at the Darkling in any way she could.

He hissed in return, his fingers digging into her skin.

"Now, now, Alina... Play nice".

"And what if I don't?"

"Trust me when I say you don't want to know".

His hand trailed back to her thigh, higher this time, slowly creeping its way in between her legs. Before she knew it, he was fully palming her through her trousers, rubbing up and down her sex, leaving Alina a whimpering mess shattering underneath his touch.

"Do you like that?" He murmured against her ear.

"Why don't you find out for yourself?" She bit back, daring him to push his exploration even further, challenging him to break through the barrier of her clothes and touch her fully.

Alina couldn't see the way the Darkling's eyes blackened with desire, couldn't admire the effect that her provocations had on the man, but she could hear the way his breath caught in his throat, feel the way his heart skipped a beat against his chest, a living proof that he wasn't as imperturbable as she thought.

The Darkling's hands roamed to the hem of her pants, his fingers playing against it before impatiently slipping underneath the fabric. He almost lost his damn mind when he noticed how wet Alina was for him, all eager and ready for him to take.

He started toying with her clit, rubbing it in small circles with his thumb as he pushed two fingers inside of her. Alina's head rolled back, nestling against the Darkling's shoulder. To the untrained eye, the scene didn't particularly stand out. It simply appeared as if Alina were resting against the leader of the Second Army, most likely tired by the trip, his hands securing her on the horse.

"Look at all the people around us", he teased, his voice a whisper behind her. "They have no idea... No clue about what my hands are doing under your kefta. Unaware I'm corrupting their precious Sun Summoner".

He picked up his pace, his movements hard and merciless. Alina tried her best to control her breathing, biting her cheeks to suppress her moans. Thankfully, the sounds made by the horses were there to drown out whatever small sounds escaped from her lips.

"Don't be shy Alina... Don't you want everyone to hear just how good my fingers are fucking into you?"

Alina almost lost it as she heard him use such crude language.

A war was raging within her. On one hand, Alina loved the secrecy, loved the idea that the Darkling was defiling her with his fingers whilst everyone around them was unaware of just how good he was making her feel. But part of her almost wanted to get caught, wanted Zoya or Mal or... anyone, really, to see the things the Darkling did to her, and only her. And the possibility of it only added to her excitement.

The Darkling worked her up until she could feel realise building in the pit of her stomach, scattering her body into a thousand pieces as it finally hit her.

"Good girl", he muttered in her ear before removing his hand from Alina as if nothing had ever happened.

**

Alina was around a fire, sitting alone over a fallen log with her eyes trained on the flames.

The Darkling was a few feet away from her, ordering some men around as they were setting up camp for the night.

Across her, she felt the heavy gaze of Mal weighing on her. She could almost taste the jealousy emanating from the tracker as she defied him with his eyes. He approached her cautiously, sitting beside her.

The silence dragged on for a while, and it was the boy who finally broke it with a heavy sigh, running his fingers through his short hair.

"Alina, I'm... I'm sorry about what I said. I don't know what I was thinking and... I didn't mean it".

Alina's heart sank a little upon hearing his words. On the one hand, something inside of her was yearning to accept the apology, dying to embrace her friend and pretend their last conversation had never happened. But on the other... Could she really forget the awful things he'd said about her? Forget the spiteful look behind his eyes? And even without taking into account their fight... Could she really ignore how he had abandoned her so many times, the lack of attention he'd given her as he was off with his military friends or hooking up with some random girl?

"Of course you meant it, Mal", sighed Alina eventually, refusing to face her friend. "You meant every single one of your words".

"I... listen, I just want you to know that I regret it, okay? I don't want this to ruin what we have together".

"And what is it that we have together?" She replied angrily, turning to him.

She needed to hear his answer, needed to understand exactly what Mal was referring to, because she, for one, could not figure it out. They were childhood friends, yes, but they weren't kids anymore, and their past didn't entitle him to who she was now.

"Are you seriously asking me this right now? You're my best friend, for fuck's sake!"

Mal was losing his temper. He couldn't believe that Alina was seriously questioning him right now, as if everything they'd been through was a lie, a figment of his imagination.

"See I... I don't think I am. I don't think I've been for quite some time. We grew up, and you drifted apart from me. You *left* me, Mal. You can't resent me for searching a home somewhere else".

"Wait... So you're telling me *he's* your home now? You don't even know him, Alina!" He yelled back, referring to the Darkling. He'd seen him earlier that morning, hated the way he had dressed Alina up with his clothing, almost as if to brand her.

"This isn't about him, Mal! This is about me. About finally coming to terms with who I am and what I want. And the Darkling... He knows me. He accepts me, Mal. And you never will. Before all of this happened... I was invisible to you. I was the quiet girl you'd leave in a corner and then come back to when no one else was available. And now... You're terrified of me. Terrified of what I can do".

"Oh, Alina... Is that really what you think of me? You couldn't be more wrong..." His voice was broken, vibrant with vulnerability.

For a brief second, he cupped her cheek with his calloused hand, the contact feeling all sorts of wrong to Alina.

"Am I interrupting something?"

The Darkling was suddenly before him, his eyes black with fury at the scene unravelling before him.

Mal removed his hand abruptly. Before he could speak, Alina rose to her feet:

"No", she declared firmly. "You aren't".

The Darkling's eyes were raging with thunder and lightning, illuminated with what felt like... jealousy?

"Very well, then", he replied dryly. "You should get some rest, Alina. The road will be long tomorrow".

"Lead the way", she challenged him with fiery eyes.

All she got in return from the Darkling was another indecipherable stare. He nodded briefly to Mal before walking away, Alina by his side as she spared a glance toward Mal, who looked shocked and hurt by her reaction. Without muttering a word to Alina, the Darkling guided her to his tent, and soon, both of them were disappearing inside, hidden from prying eyes.

This is my first work here. I'm my own beta, so if you see any mistakes, please let me know in the comments. Hope you enjoyed xx

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Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

idk how I feel about this chapter, so I might change it in the future

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The silence was suffocating. All the sounds of the outside world, whether it be the echoes of lively conversations or the whispers of the crackling wood swallowed by the fire were gone, absorbed by the thick fabric that made up the Darkling's tent. He stood before her, arms crossed behind his back like the general he was. As always, he was seemingly unphased, but something was raging in his eyes. Burning for her.

"I must say, Alina... I'm disappointed", he stated after a while.

His voice was calm, serene like the sea on a nice summer day. But, just as the ocean held the promise of storms and fury, of unbridled waves mothering destruction, so did he.

"And what could I have possibly done to deserve such a sentiment?" replied Alina with a slight tone of amusement, one he definitely did *not* like. He was as ancient as some of the gods people worshipped still, had seen Saints rise and fall, had laughed at heroes driven to madness and had survived empires collapsing until there was nothing left of them but ashes. And yet, no one had ever spoken to him in that mocking tone. No one had ever *dared* to.

His words spilled out of his mouth harsher than intended:

"I thought you wanted to see the world kneeling before us. Or at least, that's what you told me last night. And you seemed so convinced... So *determined*. And yet, here you are, going back to that boy, one who can only offer you a lifetime of mediocrity before he withers and dies, leaving you with nothing but wasted potential. Disappointed... is an understatement".

Alina smiled as if he had just complimented her, throwing him off guard. Had she not been listening to him? Had she not heard how angry he was?

"Such grand words..." Her gaze was provoking, taunting, fixed on his unforgiving black eyes. "See, I'd like to think you're just jealous, Darkling, even though you like to pretend to be above petty feelings. And now, I can't help but wonder... What was it? Was it the way he looked at me, eyes filled with sorrow and devotion? Or was it the way he touched my cheek, his fingers grazing my skin as I leaned into his palm? Or worse... Was it the fact that I let him touch me, and that I'd probably let him do much, much more to me if ..."

The Darkling bolted towards her, closing the gap between their two bodies. The movement was so sudden that Alina barely even registered what was happening, and all that she knew was that suddenly, without any warning, his right hand was at her neck. Again.

“Are you trying to provoke me, Alina?” He articulated between gritted teeth, forcing her jaw up so that she’d have no choice but to look at him, and *only* him.

“And what if I am?”

Alina was daring him with her eyes. His knuckles had gone almost white around her and she was struggling for breath. But that did not frighten her, no. If anything, Alina *loved* it. Loved the way he reacted to her, possessiveness intertwined with desire, loved the way his cold façade crumbled under her words.

She felt his other hand rise to meet her cheek, a soft caress sweetening the hurt at her neck.

“Seeing that boy touch you like that... I would’ve killed him if I didn’t need him. Tell me, dear Alina, did you like it? I wouldn’t be surprised, not after all those letters you sent him. All those words of longing and love... Is he the one you want, still? After everything you’ve told me? After everything I’ve shown you?”

“So it was you...” she whispered softly, avoiding his question. “You intercepted my letters, didn’t you? Not only that, but you read them, too?”

The Darkling’s eyes narrowed, the intensity of his black eyes hiding the promise of unbridled power as he summoned his shadows. They crept over them slowly, and soon enough, darkness was engulfing them both. Everything else in the world disappeared, and there was nothing left, nothing but the feeling of the Darkling’s possessive grip on Alina’s neck. The tingling sensation of his breath on her skin, his face so close to hers.

“Don’t pretend to be surprised, Alina. I never said I was a good man. Never tried to be. And I needed to know... needed to know what was so important about that boy”.

“That boy... has a name,” she bit back, even though she didn’t actually care. Not about the way he spoke of Mal, not about the letters, not about anything but the Darkling. But she wanted to push him. Wanted him to reveal what he was really feeling, wanted to get a glimpse of who he was underneath all that darkness. He knew so much about her, and she, so little about him.

“And it’s as insignificant as him”, retorted the Darkling, fury lacing his imperturbable words.

“See, I don’t think it is. Or else, you wouldn’t be like this. You wouldn’t be this mad. Just admit it, Darkling. You’re jealous”.

“And how could I not be!” He yelled, shattering his indifference. “How could I not be... when I see the way you care for him?”

His fingers tightened even more around Alina’s neck. He was almost expecting her to be afraid... But as Alina’s fingers illuminated with vibrant light, repelling the darkness with

white rays of sunshine, he could only see triumph burning in her eyes.

Her hands went to his chest, and slowly, she pushed him towards the end of the tent, pushed him towards the mattress lying on the ground. Surprised, he let her go, let his back hit the mattress as she straddled him, her weight steady against him.

“Of course I care for him”, said Alina, voice soft as she towered over him. “It’s hard not to, after all we’ve been through”.

She drew a hand to his face, her fingers roaming his skin, her thumb brushing the pattern of his lips. The Darkling closed his eyes, leaning into the sensation, finally feeling some sense of comfort and peace taming the ache he had felt when he'd seen Alina with the tracker, secretly fearing he could never compete with him.

“What you interrupted... was an apology of sorts. I didn’t accept it though, so you can relax, if only for now. Because if Mal really wants to fix things... I’ll let him try. But I’ll make damn sure he crawls and begs, make sure he really sees the error of his ways instead of taking my forgiveness for granted”.

She marked a pause, reminiscing past memories that seemed like they belonged to another lifetime, before continuing:

“But I don’t want him. I did, for a while. I was stupid. I was naïve. He didn’t like me that way. The only reason he wants me now... Is because *you* want me. He hates that I’ve moved on. That I’m not some fragile, clingy girl desperate for his protection anymore. That I don’t look at him as if he were the fucking sun like I used to”.

She kissed him. It was raw, desperate, her teeth claiming his bottom lip in a sweet bite. She was yearning to feel him, itching to make him understand that no one else mattered, no one but him. He shivered beneath her, his senses awakened by the delicious feeling of her body draped over him.

“And that’s all thanks to you,” she pressed on after a while, her voice soft. “You’ve changed me for the better. You’ve killed my weakness and allowed myself to be reborn as someone who I’m no longer ashamed of. I don’t need him anymore, not when you’re right here. Not when I know you’d try and steal the moon for me if I asked you to. Not when *I* want *you*. But... you can’t resent me from holding on to him. You’re not allowed to. I’ve known him all my life, and I don’t even know your *name*”.

The Darkling was hung to her every word, drinking every sound that escaped from her perfect mouth, relishing the glimpses of herself she was letting him see. Taking in what she was saying. She didn’t want the tracker, she wanted him. But she needed more than vague promises and half-formed truths. She needed to see it all.

Without any warning, the Darkling flipped Alina over, his body now covering hers.

And then, after he had stripped her of her clothes and as his lied forgotten on the hard floor next to them, after he had worshipped every inch of her body and prayed her name a

thousand ways, he whispered a single word as they were both wasting into the night, four soft syllables that brushed against her ears:

"Aleksander".

And when he finally had her where he wanted her, it was that name that escaped her lips as she cried out in pleasure.

And afterwards, once their bodies were resting nuzzled against each other, his hands lazily trailing the curves of her body, he asked to hear it again.

"Once more," he said. "Speak my name once more."

The Darkling was ancient, yes. Alina knew that. But in that moment, he was just a boy – brilliant, blessed with too much power, burdened by eternity... But burdened by solitude no more. Because he had finally found her, just as much as she had found him. Two equals, two souls, destined for forever.

"Aleksander", whispered Alina as she kissed him softly, all whilst the night was dying with the promise of another day. "Aleksander, Aleksander, Aleksander".

Chapter End Notes

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Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

For the second time in a row, Aleksander Morozova woke up with Alina's body clinging to his. Except this time, his mind wasn't clouded by doubtful second-guesses. Hearing his name for the first time in years had awoken something in him. He had spent centuries with borrowed titles and fake identities, constantly re-inventing himself to the point that he had almost *forgotten*. Almost forgotten where he came from, almost forgotten who he was. Because what was a name, if not everything? What was a name, if not what people perceived him as? What was a name, if not a definition of himself? The Darkling, the Black Heretic... those were masks, fabricated lies he hid behind, always maintaining a distance between him and the world, an impenetrable barrier upon which he had built himself as a myth, a legend, a ruthless commander. But *Aleksander*... Aleksander was some of those things, yes ; there was no need to hide his ambition, his hunger or his wits, because ever since he was a little boy, he knew he wanted more than what was given to him, always more. But Aleksander was not as cold as The Darkling. Not as distanced or unattainable. Aleksander... was *human*. And for years, he had gone without hearing it, losing himself to grandiloquent titles that meant nothing to him, only to be brought back by Alina, this beautiful girl whose head was pressed against his naked chest, making him feel things he hadn't felt in a long time. And in that moment, Aleksander Morozova dared to hope that maybe, possibly, his future wouldn't be as lonely as he thought it to be.

"So what am I supposed to call you now?" asked Alina as they were getting dressed, preparing themselves to leave the comfort of their tent and face the outside world once again. "You have so many titles... Aleksander, Darkling, General... Aleks..." she enumerated in a mocking tone, one to which he replied with a small laugh.

The Darkling finished buttoning up his kefta before grabbing Alina by her waist, kissing her slowly.

"Call me whatever you want when it's only the two of us" he chuckled against her ear in his deep morning voice. "But just so you know... I'll kill the first person who hears you referring to me as Aleksander or, Saints forbid, Aleks".

Alina's laughter filled the room, a vivid, bubbly sound that went straight to his heart.

"As you wish, Darkling".

He kissed her again, unable to resist the gravitational pull that drew him to her. It wasn't just about how his power reacted to her, wasn't just about how his shadows seemed to respond to her every touch, stronger than when he was on his own. It was also about how she fit perfectly against him, how every inch of his skin came alive when she was in the same room as him, how good and *happy* she made him feel. He had never felt happiness before, doubted such a thing even existed, really. Until her.

“Last I checked, no one is listening now” he said against her, his fingers tenderly brushing a strand of her chestnut hair behind her ear.

She smiled, and the sight nearly drove him to his knees.

“As you wish, Aleksander”.

*

As the days blurred in together, each and every one of them a monotone routine consisting in waking up, lifting camp, riding for hours then settling down for the night and doing it all over again, the Darkling couldn't help but notice that Alina had changed more than he thought. She now carried herself with her head lifted high, her body poised and graceful as she unveiled a cutthroat attitude and a commanding voice imbued with authority. He honestly couldn't be prouder of her, and he wasn't trying to hide it. On the contrary, he was well aware that he stared at her like one would admire a rare flower blooming before their very own eyes.

It was only at night that she'd let herself go, becoming all bright and warm again as soon as they both stepped into the privacy of their shared tent, the only place where they could just be Aleksander and Alina. Because, as soon as they were in the presence of others, they became the Darkling and the Sun Summoner, two of the most powerful Grisha to have ever walked the earth, two immortals holding the potential to burn entire kingdoms to the ground. And together? Together, they were a force of nature, something to be reckoned with, something to admire, something to respect but, most importantly, something to fear.

They'd spend their nights talking, getting lost in each other with their bodies pressed together as the weather got colder and colder the more they ventured into the Petrazoi mountains. They would lay tangled up between sheets and furs, revisiting the past, pondering on the present and envisioning the future they hoped for with the Fold under their control. Alina could see the passion Aleksander had for his country, the protectiveness he felt for its people and Grisha.

“If we show an ounce of weakness, Alina, they will kill us. They will kill us all. Hell, they already are! Each day I hear whispers of Grishas burnt at the stake by Fjerdans, slaughtered simply for existing because those damn northerners think of us as demons. And when it's not them, it's the Shus carving us up like we're frogs to be dissected. I can't allow this to keep going, Alina, I simply can't. I'll do whatever it takes, no matter how harsh or drastic my actions, to make it stop. To make this world safe for us again”.

“I understand”, replied Alina, voice soft as she cupped his cheek. “It pains me too. All those innocent people... Don't worry, Aleksander. We'll get the stag soon. And we'll put an end to it, together”.

They'd fight sometimes, too, arguing over strategic decisions or political considerations until the accumulated tension between the two of them led to passionate, angry sex that had Alina's hands gripping at the sheets or pulling at Aleksander's hair, a move that had him grunting within milliseconds.

"I still believe we should have taken the other path!" stated Alina one night, quite angrily. "It could have saved us days of riding. Hell, we could be in Tsibeya by now!"

"It was an unsafe option, Alina, and you know it! Fjerdans roam those parts of the mountains!" he replied, fury dancing in his eyes.

"Oh, don't tell me you're scared now!"

"I'm not scared Alina, but I'm not reckless either. Getting us killed won't lead us anywhere".

"Then what's the point of riding with a Saints-damned army?!" she retorted, throwing her hands in the air whilst pacing the tent.

"That's grand coming from you, Alina. I never took you for one who would sacrifice innocent lives to get your way".

She stopped in her tracks, planting herself firmly before him.

"Well," she snickered, "I guess there's much you don't know about me".

"I guess there is".

As their eyes were locked on each other, something changed in Aleksander's demeanour. Seeing Alina riled up and passionate... It was truly a sight to behold.

He chuckled sombrely, drawing his face near hers.

"But I know that, when I do this..."

He grabbed her waist, turning her around and pressing her back to his chest. A breath caught in Alina's throat as his lips went to her neck, and she failed to suppress a moan of pleasure as his tongue went up and down her skin. The move was unexpected, but Alina welcomed it with open hands, her anger dissolving as quickly as it had arrived.

"I get you whimpering in seconds", he continued. His voice, low and sultry, vibrated against her throat, sending waves of heat coursing through her body.

"And when I do this..."

His hand went to her stomach, caressing her under the blouse she was wearing before going to her chest, exploring the space between her breasts.

"You get instantly wet, all ready for me to take."

Indeed, wetness was already gathering between Alina's thighs, and she didn't know whether she hated or loved the fact that he was right, that he had her body's reactions all figured out.

She turned around, facing him. Two could play this game.

"Yeah, well..." she stated confidently, "I know that, when I do this..."

Her fingers grabbed her shirt, and in a quick move it was gone, leaving her bare before him.

"Your eyes turn dark and your cock hardens, and all you can think about is how hard you'll be having me".

There was an edge to her voice, a little spark of stubbornness and rebellion that drove Aleksander wild. Her smile was glacial and cruel as she watched him. As she had predicted, there he was, devouring her with his eyes, his dick already visibly straining at his pants.

They stared at each other for a moment, neither one of them wanting to cave in the first.

"So what do we do with this information?" replied the Darkling finally, unable to resist the tension any longer. "Because from where I stand, we can spend the night with you yelling at me for choices that can't be changed, or we can set our differences aside and busy ourselves with more... *enjoyable* activities".

And before they knew it, they were tearing each other's clothes off, all hungry mouths and desperate hands as they tried to get the most out of each other. He pushed her against a modest wooden table, his hand clearing it from the maps and other documents that covered it. The papers now laid scattered on the ground, Alina taking their place.

Aleksander's lovemaking always had a roughness to it, mixing pain with pleasure to the point that they both became indissociable from one another. That night, once again, his movements were heavy and greedy, his teeth claiming Alina's skin whilst she stroked him up and down, teasing him to the point of desperation.

"You are..." he grunted, finally aligning himself with her entrance, "insufferable, Alina. So, so disrespectful. I've killed men for less".

He thrust inside of her, his hips unmerciful as Alina squeezed him in with her inner muscles, savouring the way he reacted to her, fingers digging into her skin and leaving bruises in their wake.

"You don't...scare me, Aleksander" she managed to whimper. "It's about... damn time someone stands up to you".

"Hmfff", he grunted, sucking and biting Alina's neck. "You love acting tough don't you? But I know... you secretly love being at my mercy when we're like this. Tell me... What would people say about their Sun Summoner if they found out how pliant you are when my cock is buried inside of you?"

"That's not... true", she lied in response, her mind hazy as he dove into her just the way she liked.

“Are you sure about that?” he questioned with a glint of malice.

Before Alina could reply, Aleksander slid out of her, the action taking every single ounce of his will power as he towered over her. With him, he took away all the pleasure that was building in Alina’s lower stomach, leaving her feeling empty and unfulfilled.

“Aleksander...” was all that she could say as she dragged her fingers amongst his back, trying to guide him back into her again.

“What?” he replied teasingly, his eyes locked on hers.

“You know what”.

“I really, really don’t”.

She sighed.

“Please”.

And with one punishing thrust, he was inside of her again, and everything was right in her world.

“You know I love it when you beg”.

*

The temperatures grew kinder as they made their way down the mountains. Soon, they were all following Mal’s directions as he guided them into the snowy plains of Tsibeya. The tracker was meticulous with his work, noticing miniscule details that no one else seemed to pick up. They were deep within a western trail they had been following for days when Mal approached the Darkling. The others were busy, preparing camp for the night, and Alina was nowhere to be found.

“We need to head east as soon as tomorrow. I think we’re on the wrong path”.

The Darkling assessed the boy with his habitual coolness, staring him up and down.

“What makes you say that, tracker?”.

“It’s... Hard to explain. A gut feeling, let’s call it”.

The Darkling marked a pause, pondering the tracker’s words before giving his approval in the form of a nod.

“Very well. We’ll go east. But pray to the Saints you’re not wrong, tracker, lest I figure out you’re more useful to me dead rather than alive”.

Mal gave a joyless laugh, determined to stand up to the man, determined to show that he was not afraid of him.

“Please, we both know you need me. Plus, Alina would never allow it”.

The Darkling gritted his teeth. He could accept many things, but disrespect was not one of them, especially when it came from *him*. He didn't fear him? Very well, let him make a fool out of himself. Throughout his life, before he was the Black Heretic or the Darkling, several people had made the mistake of underestimating Aleksander Morozova. Suffice to say, they all came to regret it one way or another, and it always involved blood and tears, for the darkness was unforgiving and shadows did not forget.

“Don’t test me, boy, or we’ll have to find out where Alina’s true loyalties lie”, he replied, his gaze piercing right through Mal's.

Without giving the tracker a chance to reply, the Darkling turned around, his black kefta swirling in the wind. His parting words, however, were loud and clear for Mal to hear:

“And trust me, with the way I warm her bed every night, I don’t think they lie with you”.

Chapter End Notes

This is my first work here. I'm my own beta, so if you see any mistakes, please let me know in the comments. Hope you enjoyed xx

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Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

Hi all you lovely people ! Just to let you guys know, I'm about to enter "exam season" at my university and I'm literally drowning under deadlines rn, so the updates might be a little scarce up until the end of May. I'm free after that, so yay ! I'm not giving up on the story, I promise.

Also, thank you for all the lovely comments, you all really keep me going <3

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Mal had led them to a small clearing covered in snow. It was just him, Alina and the Darkling ; the others had stayed behind, hidden in between the trees as they made themselves invisible so as to not frighten the herd, but still, keeping an eye out for any potential troubles.

“He’ll be here”, announced Mal with his gruff voice, his breath a misty cloud around him. “I can feel it”.

His voice was almost defying Alina and the Darkling, daring them to question his words.

Despite the lingering anger she still felt towards the boy, Alina decided to reassure him in that moment. They were all tired and shivering with cold as lighting a fire was not an option for fear it might frighten the stag ; now was not the time to pick another fight. Besides, they’d have plenty of time to talk once they were back at the Little Palace.

“So we wait”, she said in response, cutting off the snide remark that was already threatening to leave Aleksander’s lips. “I trust your word”.

The hours passed them by with excruciating slowness. Sitting between the two men, Alina had never felt more uncomfortable in her life. On her left, Aleksander seemed unbothered as usual, his eyes trained on the line of trees before them as if the stag were to emerge out of them at any minute. However, Alina noticed the slight way his jaw clenched every time he spotted Mal shuffling next to her out of the corner of his eye, the only thing revealing just how annoyed he was by her childhood friend’s presence. Mal, on the other hand, did nothing to hide his disdain, with little huffs of discontent escaping his mouth at irregular intervals. And if those weren’t obvious enough, the murderous glance he directed at the Darkling as he unclasped the heavy black fur hanging from his shoulders in order to wrap it around a shivering Alina was unmissable.

Hours passed them by, the three of them waiting in complete darkness, the moon being their only source of light. Eventually, the Darkling rose, smoothing his clothing as he announced:

“I need to check on the others, make sure everything is all right. If you spot anything or anyone out of the ordinary, be ready to kill. We don’t want to take our chances with the Fjerdans.”

“Got it”, replied Mal before giving Alina a chance to speak, readily cocking his gun.

The Darkling’s gaze was as cold as the permafrost as his eyes locked with Mal’s:

“I wasn’t talking to you, tracker. Especially considering how your last encounter with the Fjerdans went”.

He turned to Alina, leaning in as he pressed his lips to her forehead.

“I won’t be long, Alina. If anything happens, remember what I showed you. Remember what we practiced”.

And with those last words he was gone, his black cape floating around him as he walked towards the trees up until darkness engulfed him completely.

“Arrogant prick”, muttered Mal under his breath once he had disappeared.

Alina laughed, her light chuckles resonating around them.

“He is a bit full of himself, isn’t he?” she confirmed, the warmth in her tone unmistakably charged with affection.

Mal smiled, joining in:

“I’d say a bit is an understatement”, he replied, wrinkles forming around his eyes as his laughs mingled with Alina’s.

And for a while, it was like the old times again, before anything had ever happened; it was just the two of them, joking around, happy and worriless. But that feeling was nothing but ephemeral : they weren’t children anymore, and too much had happened, too much had been said for this lightness to last. As their laughter died down, their features hardened, and they were brought back to reality.

“You really like him, don’t you?” asked Mal eventually, his eyes avoiding Alina’s, his voice suddenly serious.

“Yeah I... I think I do, Mal” she replied, her tone soft.

“I have to say, I don’t see what you see in him. I never pegged you for the one to be attracted to the tall and brooding type”.

His smile was back, smaller than the previous one, but still, there.

“And what type exactly did you think I’d go for?”.

“Smart, wickedly handsome... name starts with ‘M’ and ends with ‘al’”, he retorted jokingly, gently shoving Alina with his shoulders.

“Ha! You wish!”, she exclaimed, shoving him right back. “Who’s the arrogant prick now?”

“Touché”, conceded Mal, before clearing his throat and adding: “In all seriousness.... I like seeing you like this. Healthy, happy... It’s been a while. It hurt me, at first, when I saw just how much you were thriving without me. It made me jealous, I felt left behind, and I was a prick. So euhm... yeah, I’m sorry about that”.

“Mal...”, whispered Alina, but it didn’t stop her friend from continuing.

“And I’m sorry about before, too”. His words were rushed now, almost as if he was trying as fast as he could to get rid of the weight hanging on his shoulders. “You deserved much more attention than I ever gave you... And I’m glad you found someone who recognizes just how much you’re worth. The Darkling might be a pretentious dickhead, but I see the way he looks at you. I see the way he treats you. And I’m happy for you, honestly. I guess... I guess I’m just a little bit sad, too. I’m losing you, and it sucks”.

Alina gently squeezed Mal’s hand, trying to reassure him. There they were, those words she had forever longed to hear. There he was, finally acknowledging she was important to him, acknowledging that she *mattered*. But... Something inside of her was far from satisfied. Was this supposed to be it? Just a few awkward, kind words and everything was right in her world again? Just a banale apology and she was supposed to forget all the hurt Mal had caused her? All the pain and the tears? And there was also the fact that he had been partly motivated by the interest the Darkling had expressed for her. Alina was convinced her friend would have never said those words if the most powerful man in the country hadn’t claimed her, putting her by his side. And if that’s what it took for her him to realize her worth...

Before she could make sense of things, however, her train of thoughts was suddenly interrupted.

“Alina, look!” exclaimed Mal.

Alina’s eyes followed the direction that he was pointing to with his finger, and she gasped. Right before them, a white stag stood majestically in the middle of the clearing, his antlers almost glowing as they reflected the moonlight from the cool icy sky.

“It’s him”, whispered Alina, standing up. “It’s Morozova’s stag”.

She was sure of it. The pull she felt towards the creature as she took in its sight was unmistakable, almost identical to the one she felt when Aleksander was around.

Like calls to like.

“What do we do?” asked Mal as he pointed his rifle towards the animal. “Should I shoot it, or...?”

“Don’t!” intervened Alina, her fingers gripping the barrel and pushing it down. “I have to be the one to kill it”.

“And how do you plan on doing that? I hate to break it to you, but you’re a terrible shot”.

“With my help, of course” retorted a cool voice behind them.

Mal jumped, startled by the abrupt interruption. This was not the case for Alina. She had felt Aleksander’s presence way before he had spoken, had sensed him as he lurked in the shadows. It was kind of crazy, when she thought about it, the way they were connected, the way her body was constantly aware of him and came to life whenever he was near her.

“Saints! Why do you always have to make such dramatic appearances?” exclaimed the tracker.

The Darkling ignored him as he approached them, stopping right behind Alina. As he embraced her from behind, he placed both of his hands on Alina’s. Instantly, she latched on to the power emanating from him, amplifying her own.

“Ready?” he asked.

“Ready”, she affirmed.

Leaning into his touch, Alina focused, willing her sunlight into physical substance just like Aleksander had taught her during some of the restless nights they had spent in their tent. Then, she directed it toward the stag, a fine, bright line, seemingly harmless, that swiftly cut through the animal’s head, killing it promptly. The red blood spilling out of its cadaver was a grim contrast against the snowy landscape, and it tainted its once beautiful white fur a violent crimson which turned black as soon as Alina tamed her light. She almost felt bad for the animal. He had lived such a long life, had survived through centuries, maybe even millennia, only to end dead at her hand. That feeling of guilt was soon forgotten, though, as she recalled what she had killed it for. *Power*.

“Good girl” whispered the Darkling behind her, letting her go. “David!” He yelled, his voice echoing through the clearing, calling upon the Materialki.

A tall figure emerged from the trees, answering the Darkling’s call, and it was soon followed by several others ; Grisha or Oprichniki, they all wanted to bear witness to what was about to come.

They watched in silence as David kneeled beside the severed head of the stag, using his powers on its antlers to shape them into what would become Alina’s necklace. His work took mere minutes, and soon enough, he was handing the brand-new amplifier to Alina. She took it in her hands, it’s weight surprisingly familiar already. It was beautiful work, looking like a delicate, intricate piece of jewellery that a Noble lady might wear. She turned to Aleksander, who had not left her side.

“Will you do me the honour?” she asked, gesturing at him to take the necklace and clasp it around her neck.

“Always”.

He cleared Alina’s hair from the back of her neck, pushing it over her left shoulder, and all she could feel was how cool his fingers were on her skin as he secured the amplifier around her throat.

“Done”, he stated after a few seconds.

Alina turned towards him, her eyes looking for his.

“Okay”, she murmured. “Here goes nothing”.

Once again, she summoned her light, but this time she was on her own. Immediately, Alina’s hands lit up, her sun burning brighter and hotter than ever before ; it was not only surrounding her entirely, giving her the appearance of a freshly-fallen star, but was also bathing the entire clearing in vivid rays of gold and white. Around them, the woods came alive, illuminated as if it were the middle of a warm summer day.

Alina could not see him, but Aleksander was in awe as he took in the sight of her. Here she was, his precious Sun Summoner, finally unleashing all the power he knew she had within her. Finally embracing who she truly was: a living, walking Goddess, Saints be damned.

“Beautiful”, he gasped, drawing closer to her.

And then, he pressed his hands together, casting his thick shadows around Alina and him, until it was only the two of them, sheltered from the outside world and hidden from curious bystanders, trapped in a bubble where day and night intertwined.

He cupped her cheek, kissing her passionately. She replied to the gesture with vibrant ardour, her hands tugging at his hair to bring his head closer to her, her tongue hungry for more, her teeth clashing against his. Together, like this, they were fucking unstoppable, and that thought sent adrenaline and excitement rushing through her veins.

“What do we do now?”, she asked after a while, the kiss leaving them both breathless.

“Now, my dear Alina, we kill the king”, announced Aleksander, his intense gaze fixed entirely on her.

All he got as a reply was a wicked smile animating Alina’s face. She was ready.

Chapter End Notes

This is my first work here. I'm my own beta, so if you see any mistakes, please let me know in the comments. Hope you enjoyed xx

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Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

Hi everyone ! I'd like to start this chapter with an apology. I had planned on updating this fic at the beginning of June, after my exams, but then life got a bit in the way. In between a new job opportunity, a road-trip to Italy so we could save one of my friends stranded in an airport, and then having to cross the Atlantic to visit my family which I haven't seen in two years because of covid, I just couldn't find the time or the will in me to write. I'll make up for it though ! And thank you for sticking with this fic if you're still here :-)

TW : mention of Genya's SA

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Safety precautions were thrown out the window on the ride back to the kingdom's capital. When traveling to Tsibeya, they had purposely stayed away from busy paths or populated areas, choosing to borrow abandoned roads or cutting through thick, unfrequented woods. Now, on the contrary, Aleksander had made sure they'd pass every single village or city that was more or less on their way, adding days upon days to their journey.

"The people need to see you", he had explained to Alina. "They need to see the both of us. Shadow and light coming together to restore this nation's glory and defend them both from the monsters lurking in the Fold and those who plot against us in the North and South".

He had then caressed her cheek, tenderly and slowly, his grey eyes burning with ambition and greed.

"Because when they see that... who do you think they'll be loyal to? Some fat king wasting away behind gilded gates? Some prince they have never seen, too busy blowing off money on horses and girls? Or us...? You and me, two living, breathing Saints—wait, no, scratch that, two living breathing *gods*—willing to fight for them."

That was all Alina had needed to hear. Needed to *feel*, too. She was never an ambitious girl, had grown fond of the idea of living a boring life. Getting married, having some kids, growing old before inevitably dying a peaceful death surrounded by her family... That was what she used to want: nothing out of the ordinary. But now? She wanted glory, power and influence, people bowing down to her with nothing but respect in their eyes, whether from fear or adoration she did not care. And damn it, if she couldn't have that, then she would unleash pain, blood and carnage, was willing to die as long as she went down in flames and her fury swallowed the earth around her so that everybody would remember her name. She

could feel it, the power of the sun coursing through her, and it had radically changed her in the matter of months. Had she known it was there all along, perhaps she would never have bothered with such mundane considerations.

Gods, Aleksander had said.

Living, breathing gods.

That's what she wanted to be.

That's what she was.

There was only triumph in her eyes as they visited town after town. Aleksander quickly noticed the way she gleamed with pride as Ravkans either kneeled before them or approached them with religious fervour drawn across their faces, arms outstretched towards them in the hopes of touching them and securing a blessing. After a couple of visits, the crowds started chanting for them too. Titles of "Dark Saint" or "Sun Saint", "Starless one" and "Bright one" had circulated across the country, and soon enough, everyone knew about how this unlikely pair, perfect contrasts made for each other, were going to save Ravka.

Now, their journey was coming to an end. The capital was only a few days away. Alina and Aleksander had settled in some fancy inn near Ryevost in the hopes of getting some rest before hitting the road at dawn. They had enjoyed little to no privacy the last couple of days and this dimly-lit room offered a much enjoyed reprieve from the scrutiny they constantly faced.

Alina's back was turned to Aleksander, busying herself with the clothes she had in hand, folding them neatly on top of a wooden drawer.

His arms were around her waist before she could finish her task.

"Aleksander... I really need to finish this. You know I hate leaving a mess".

"That's a shame, because I'm about to make a bigger one", he replied smoothly, his breath ghosting over her neck.

It didn't take long for his teeth to nip at the skin there, biting, kissing and sucking slowly and languorously. Alina winced at the pain, but it wasn't out of discomfort. It was as if liquid fire was now coursing through her veins, overwhelming heat accompanied by the wetness that was quickly gathering between her thighs.

His hands, secured around her stomach at first, started roaming further down, wrinkling her blouse before slipping right under. She could feel the cold metal of his rings on her lower belly, the sensation of his long fingers quickly finding the hem of her pants and teasing alongside it with one hand whilst the other rode up, cupping one of her breasts.

It was too much. He was everywhere, surrounding her small body with every fiber of his being, his tall frame a wall behind her. There was no escape—not that she wanted one—and

soon enough she was leaning in, pressing her body further into his as she surrounded to the sweet sensations he was responsible for.

When his hand finally slithered under the fabric of her trousers, finding the softest, most sensible part of her body, Alina couldn't help but letting out a strangled whimper, her head rolling over and resting against Aleksander's shoulder.

"Turn around, dear. I want to see you".

His voice was lower than usual.

Alina executed herself, momentarily freeing herself from his touch. Immediately, her eyes locked with his. They were so dark, almost black, and entirely focused on her. It was something she had never experienced before, someone looking at her with that kind of intensity, with that kind of *need*. It sent chills down her spine.

She leaned in, kissing him savagely, her teeth skimming his lower lip and drawing blood. A guttural sound rumbled through Aleksander's throat, his hand finding Alina's neck as he matched her vehemence. The taste of him was now laced with a coppery taste on her tongue, pleasure intertwined with pain as he guided her small body towards the heavy wooden door of their room.

Alina's body crashed with a loud thud, a small yelp of surprise escaping her lips.

Aleksander's hands went to her pants, pushing them down alongside her underwear. He kneeled before her, his hands roaming down her legs to remove the garments completely. Having him like that, completely under her, was truly a sight to behold. The most powerful man of the country, on his knees before her. Only for her.

He looked up to her, his fiery gaze trapping hers.

His hands tightened around her thighs, spreading them wider, his head in between them. Taking his time, he kissed his way up her inner thighs, not ever breaking eye-contact, every single kiss driving Alina closer to madness. Want was consuming her entirely, and Aleksander could see that, was taking pleasure in making her wait as he dragged his tongue across her skin, loving the way she was shaking around him, his lover overcome with need.

"Please", was all she could manage to whimper, and still, that wasn't enough for Aleksander. He wanted her undone to the point where she couldn't even speak anymore.

He licked right through her center, Alina's taste now replacing the blood on his tongue. He was sucking and nibbling at her clit, the work of a hungry man desperate for satiation.

Alina moaned loudly, unable to contain herself. Her fingers were now tugging at Aleksander's long hair, hard, urging him to do more as her back arched into him.

"I'm... I can't... Fuck" was all that she could manage to say in between heavy pants, drawing a smile from Aleksander.

When his tongue finally slid into her, she couldn't help but let out a loud cry, the sensation shattering her completely.

And then the realisation of where they were hit her out of the blue.

"Aleks... Fuck I'm... You're so... But the guards, they're right behind the door... They're going to... *Oh fuck yes, just like that...*"

Her sounds of pleasure were getting louder and louder as Alina's body became more unbridled, her body fully fucking into her lover's tongue at this point and unashamedly riding his face.

"Aleksander... They're gonna hear us" she finally let out, the sentence taking a monumental effort from her part as her mind was solely focused on the man whose head was between her thighs and the pleasure he was responsible for.

He smiled under her.

"Good. I'll never tire of making sure everyone knows who you belong to".

His words were a hot breath on Alina's sex, a brief reprieve from bliss before his tongue plunged into her again, this time accompanied by two of his fingers. As he began fucking into her, rocking her body against the door with loud bangs, it was clear that he was taking pleasure from the evident noise they were producing.

"You're mine, my dear Alina. Only mine".

He added a third finger, withdrawing his tongue, and in and out they went, pumping furiously into her as his tongue played with her clit.

"So, so wet" he whispered against her. "And it's all for me to take. To taste".

It was getting too much for Alina to handle. This man had her seeing the fucking universe unravel before her eyes, her climax building furiously in her lower belly.

"Now, my dear. Be a good girl and come for me".

That was all it took to tip her over the edge, Aleksander's fingers pumping into her through her orgasm.

His eyes were fixed on her face, not wanting to miss a single second of the scene. He knew it was an image that'd be engraved in his head forever, one he'd come back to in the middle of boring meetings or tedious readings. One that would accompany him to his grave.

He was also painfully aware of his cock straining against his pants, hard and throbbing, dying to slide into Alina's wet pussy and ride her senseless, rough and wild like she liked.

He could already picture it...

He'd turn her over, press her against the door with his hands around her waist as he'd bend her over, guiding her ass and that sweet, exposed cunt towards him to fill it up with his dick. She'd cry harder than ever before, already sensitive from the orgasm he'd given her, begging for him in desperation and need. He could already hear it:

"Don't stop, I'm... Harder! Harder!" she'd plea, her screams barely covering the wet sounds of his cock slamming in and out of her drenched cunt, barely muffling the slaps of his balls against her ass.

"Such a needy... little whore..." he'd tease, ramming in and out of her. *"A fucking slut for my cock"*.

In, out. In, out.

His fingers would then find her clit, and Alina's body would jerk in response, her pleasure almost unbearable.

"But even sluts have manners, Alina. You want to come? Better be... Fucking polite about it. Don't forget who you're talking to"

"Please! Aleksander, please..."

"Good... Girl"

And they would both come together with his cock moving in and out of her, Alina's pussy milking him dry as he filled her up with his seed. It'd drip down her legs as he removed himself of her, and a primal feeling would take over him, a sick, twisted possessiveness born from the thought that he'd claimed her.

...But there would be other occasions for such endeavours. Tonight... Tonight he wanted it all to be about her. She deserved it.

Ignoring the debauched imagery his mind had come up with, he rose, adjusting himself through the fabric before planting a soft kiss against Alina's lips.

"Let's go to bed".

*

Alina was unable to sleep.

"Aleks... Are you awake?" she whispered in the dark against the body that was pressed to hers. She waited a few seconds for the answer.

"Well", mumbled a groggy voice, "I guess now I am".

Something had been on her mind for a few days now, and even though she was planning on bringing it up in the morning, her restless mind had finally made her cave.

She decided to be straightforward about it.

“I think Genya should kill the king”.

The room went silent, with only the sound of both their heartbeats pulsing through the air. Finally, Aleksander sighed, his body turning to hers so that he could face her.

“You know... I agree, Alina. I was thinking the same thing. I promised as much, actually. It’s only fair after... after everything”.

“It’s just... She deserves so much better, Aleks”.

Alina’s head pressed into his chest.

“I know, dear. I know. It’s something I’ve been living with for a while. I know I’m a terrible man, I’ll never even try to pretend the contrary. I’m too ambitious, too power-hungry, too cold and too unphased to fool anyone. But Genya’s situation... That might be the only thing weighing on my conscience. Not the men I’ve killed, not the villages I’ve destroyed or the lives I’ve thrown to waste to serve my agenda. Just her. She has been nothing but loyal to me, and here I am, unable to do anything about it...Until now. Until I found you”.

“Did you know... did you know what would happen to her when you brought her to the palace?”

Alina’s voice was neutral, but she knew only one answer would bring her peace of mind, and it was a question that had been torturing her for weeks now.

“No”. His answer was firm, straightforward. “Had I known, I would have never...”

He let out a heavy breath.

“The king mentioned his need for a tailor. And Genya was so talented... I knew he would use her for her powers, of course. She wasn’t destined to be a soldier but a servant, catering to our rulers. She knew that too, of course. Thought it was a privilege to be under their direct orders”.

He paused a moment.

“She came to me the first time it happened. I was so mad, Alina. So, so mad. Genya was supposed to be under my protection, and I just... Failed her. I felt so hopeless, too. Realising there was nothing I could do to help. He was the king, and me... Just a general, albeit a powerful one. A mere servant as well”.

His voice was getting angry.

“It’s that same feeling of powerlessness that has chased me all my life. The creeping knowledge that whatever I do, I’ll always be under some asshole’s orders because I wasn’t

born into royalty. My whole life, I've been working to free myself of these shackles. Because if there's one thing I've learned, is that you'll never be truly free unless you're sitting at the top. And now, you and me... We get to be free, Alina. And hopefully, free those who we care for".

Silence ensued. What was there to say after all?

After a while, Aleksander's words broke it again.

"I tried to help her at first, you know. I just... I do want to mention this. Don't want you to think I'm a heartless monster. I mean, I am. I know I am. But never to those I care for. I was so mad... I can't even put it into words. If the king had crossed my path then, I would have probably sliced his head off. And then I would have been hanged for treason. But you know what? I would have probably died with a smile of my face, knowing I'd rid the planet of that dickhead. Genya calmed me down, thankfully. Reminded me that killing the king was not an option, not like that. He would've just been replaced by his son anyways, who is basically the same as him. No, I needed to be careful, and so did she. One wrong move and it was game over for the both of us. So I prepared for her to leave discreetly and I promised her I'd get revenge eventually".

This was all new information for Alina. Genya... Was supposed to have escaped?

"So... why did she stay?" She asked, wanting to know more.

"Because she's a much better person that I'll ever be. She was meant to leave in the dead of the night and head West. Hop on a ship to Ketterdam and never come back. But before she stepped on the carriage I'd arranged to come pick her up, she turned to me and asked if there would be others. Others like her. Others who would replace her. And I didn't even reply. We both knew the answer. What the king wanted, he got. Always. So she stayed. Didn't want other Grisha to suffer like she had".

"I'm... I didn't know that".

"It's not something she shares willingly. But yes. She chose to stay. Became my spy. Has gathered information I would not have obtained without her help. All of that in the hopes that, one day, she'd see that man's head roll to the ground and his guts spill on his marble floor. There's nothing I can do to erase what happened to her. Nothing I can do to make it right. I can just offer her revenge. And I'd know she'd be delighted to have the king's blood on her hands, would relish the sight of the life leaving his eyes at her doing".

"It's decided then".

Chapter End Notes

This is my first work here. I'm my own beta, so if you see any mistakes, please let me know in the comments. Hope you enjoyed xx

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Chapter 8

Chapter Summary

Sorry for dropping out of the face of the earth !

Turns out my boyfriend accidentally stumbled onto this fic and read it and I seriously considered digging a hole and laying in it forever. Aleksander's dick is everywhere in this story and the mortification really got me lol.

To my best friend: I singlehandedly blame you for this.

To everyone else: thank you for sticking up with me ! More will come, though I don't know when. also sorry this chapter is so short, I just wanted to wrap some things before moving on to other things. I solemnly swear the next chapter will be filled with smut.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The sweet smell of smoke engulfed the rooms of the King and Queen of Ravka.

It turned out that light could do many, many things if wielded properly. Alina had discovered that concentrating her powers on a single spot for a certain amount of time eventually allowed for sparks to ignite. And, in her merciless glory, Alina ensured that those sparks, little flecks of gold and yellow, turned into an all-consuming fire. This fire was different than the Inferni ones ; whereas they had mastered the ability to control it, Alina's was primal, untamed and unleashed as nature intended. It didn't bend to her will ; she couldn't wield it like a knight would its sword or a blacksmith its hammer. The fire, once born from her light, stopped being hers and took on an essence of its own.

And that is why, a bemused smile on her face, she was so eager to watch the flames slowly devour the royal tapestry, whilst the Queen looked at her in horror, the corpse of her dead husband lying next to her in their bed. She had been tied up, unbreakable shadows curled up around her wrists and ankles and gagging her mouth, and so had been her husband when Genya pierced his heart with a sharp dagger. That is the way she had wanted his life to end, entirely at her mercy, his terrified eyes locked on hers as she took his life away.

The way he had taken hers, long ago.

Only she was the only one who got to live.

She didn't care for his wife in the slightest, and so she promptly left the room once her revenge had been enacted, leaving the Queen alone with Alina and the Darkling. It was a shame, really, that they didn't care much for her either ; she had never done much around court, too busy living her lavish lifestyle to ever weigh much on political matters. Her status,

however, made her unworthiness irrelevant: she was the Queen, and thus, she had to die. And so, not wanting to bother with the trouble of washing off her blood, not deeming her worthy enough of death at their hands, they left her there, her face frozen in silent screams as the fire slowly, but surely, made its way to the bed.

Vasily Lanstov's quarters were next.

It's a frightening thing to witness, just how fast fire spreads, how devouring and inevitable it is. Alina, however, found that to be rather spectacular ; incredible, how the few little sparks she had created were going to assure her the throne and, along with it, every single thing she had ever wanted and every single thing she had come to desire since her arrival to the Little Palace. Love. Security. And, above all, power.

She left the grounds of the Grand Palace with her hand in Aleksander's, their backs to the fiery inferno they had created.

And, when they finally reached his chambers, both lovers holding each other in a tight embrace, teeth clashing and hands teasing each other's senses until finally, finally, Alina managed to roll Aleksander on his back before sinking into him, riding him slowly with both hands pressing against his chest, mouth slightly open, he was so grateful for that warm, yellow light, so powerful despite emanating from a distance, that allowed for him to admire every single feature of her face as she cried in ecstasy.

The story of the tragic fire who took down half of the Grand Palace would live on for centuries after the events, as it forever changed the course of Ravkan royalty. The few Inferni and Tidemakers present at the time had done their best to control the flames, but alas, they had been overwhelmed by the nature of the catastrophe, and had arrived too late to save the monarchs, their son, and a few of the staff. Maybe more could have been done were it not for the Fjerdans who had been stirring up trouble at the border —or so had the Darkling allegedly heard from his informants the day before the tragedy, promptly dispatching a great number of Grisha to support the Second Army. Curiously enough, the foreshadowed Fjerdan danger never came — Perhaps the Darkling's informants had been wrong after all.

Everyone expected chaos to descend upon the kingdom once the news broke out it was without ruler ; Ravka's enemies were ready to pounce, eager to rip the country apart whilst it was at it most vulnerable. To prevent this, Alina and The Darkling assumed command — temporarily, of course, just whilst the succession affairs were sorted out— and the predicted troubles never came to be. If anything, the transition of power had been quieter than previous ones. The Starless Saint and the Sun Summoner provided experience, wisdom, and strength to the kingdom, something newly crowned kings often lacked when they succeeded their fathers. Of course, second cousins and distant relatives to the Lanstov name started coming out of the woods, tried claiming their place on the Ravkan throne and started parading the streets, claiming to be the people's King. Their charade lasted a couple of weeks at most before they would quietly, and mysteriously, disappear —to no one's chagrin. Some may have found that suspicious, but no one was ready to question the effectiveness of Alina Starkov and the mysterious dark General: who better to run a threatened kingdom than two fearless warriors who had firsthandly faced the bloody horrors of war and had shared its experience with common Ravkan soldiers whilst royalty lived on seemingly unaffected. Of

course, the power they both wielded was also something to be considered, as tales of its greatness had given everyone a newly found sense of hope. Thus, slowly but surely, Alina and the Darkling strengthen their hold on the Ravkan throne, counting on the loyalties of both armies and the people, whose religious fervour had grown to unprecedented levels.

But they still had a war to win. So, a few days after the incident, Alina and the Darkling embarked on a vessel stationed at the edge of the Unsea accompanied by a certain number of foreign diplomatic delegations who would accompany them on a little trip to Os Kervo.

The rest of the world was about to find out just how powerful they both were together. And they'd better be afraid, for Alina and Aleksander were coming for everything.

Chapter End Notes

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